FARM ANIMAL NEWSLETTER - DECEMBER 2020

FLUKE UPDATE: The results are in from our wettest monitor farm—NEGATIVE!

The remaining monitor flocks are all negative or showing extremely low levels. Many of you will know that the blood sample informs us when we have 2 week old fluke. **These results all tell us there is no need to fluke dose yet**. We are in a similar situation to last year with a very late emergence. The problem we now have is that there are no lambs on the pastures that the ewes graze to be representative of the fluke situation so further sampling is of no use.

Our recommendation is to carry out your first fluke dose when the ewes are all nicely 6 weeks in lamb with a product effective against immature flukes (Triclabendazole based if there is no fluke resistance to Triclabendazole on your farm, or a Closantel based product if there is known Triclabendazole resistance), then repeat as per the programme in your Health Plan. If you don't have a Health Plan, our vets will be very happy to discuss this with you.

COLD CALVES COST CASH!

Finally! The weather has forecast a drop in temperature, hopefully leaving behind the mild, wet weather we've been experiencing. Many of us will be thankful but what impact will the cold temperatures have on young calves' immune systems and growth rates?

Energy is essential for growth, calves need both fat and protein in order to grow and if to be replacement heifers, be ready to be served by 15 months and calve at 24 months. If dairy replacement calves don't grow well, we rely on them growing during their first lactation resulting in a reduced milk! Research shows if the calving weight of a heifer is 600kg rather than 555kg – half of the energy consumed can be diverted to milk instead of growth – this represents 485 litres more milk in the first lactation - **£121**.

Energy is also essential to fuel the immune system – if the calf is utilising energy to keep warm, their immune systems will be less effective and they are at an increased risk of getting pneumonia or scours.

In dairy animals, research shows the consequence of a calf having pneumonia impacts on that animal's first lactation to the financial value of **£189**.

By spending a little now, whilst they are calves, we can save a **lot** when they eventually start to contribute to the tank.

When the temperature drops below 10 degrees – NOW – we can support calves in 3 easy ways:

1. **CALF JACKETS:** A direct way to stop heat loss from the calf, and they are reusable!
2. **DEEPER BEDDING**: Extra straw allows calves to nest, they need to be able to bury their legs in clean, dry straw.
3. **INCREASED MILK FEEDS:** For each 5 degree drop below 15 degrees air temperature, feed calves an extra 50g of milk replacer or 0.33l of whole milk.

Don't let your calves get cold this winter – it will cost you cash in the long run!

CELL COUNTS AND BACTOSCAN CASE STUDIES

You may remember the newsletters at the start of the winter regarding mastitis control and it's effects on cell counts and Bactoscan results. Four farms which have investigated their Bactoscan and cell count problems have seen dramatic results which are summarised below. All four farms were above the penalty threshold for one or both measurements and had been for a number of months having tried various control methods.

The penalty level averaged out at 0.5 pence per litre but had the potential to increase dramatically if nothing was done soon. The four farms in question were very different in their approach to milking, yield achieved and veterinary input.

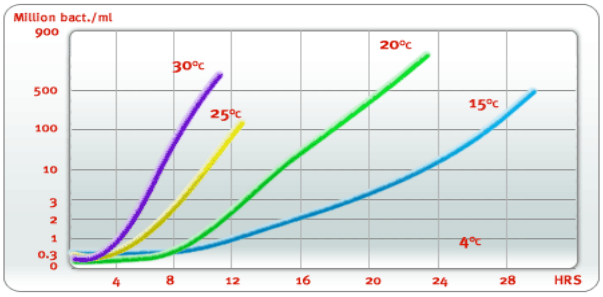
FARM A

Farmer A approached us regarding a high Bactoscan issue. Bulk tank and individual cow milk sample were taken and analysed. In addition the milking routine, management of the parlour and housing facilities were observed during a routine visit.

The results of the milk samples diagnosed a high level of environmental pathogens entering the bulk tank.

The treatment plan was to reinstate fore-milk stripping and to use Pre-foam™ as part of the pre-milking routine.

The outcome of these changes resulted in the Bactoscan and the somatic cell count reducing to below the penalty band by the next monthly recording.



FARM B

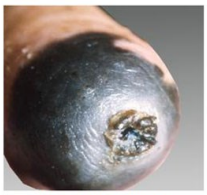
The issue Farmer B was experiencing was initially discussed at his routine visit. Both cell count and Bactoscan tests were very high. A bulk milk sample suggested cold resistant bacteria were the major concern. Further investigation showed that the prolonged milking time and the two tanks linked in parallel caused a delay in cooling the milk to below four degrees.

Discussion with the engineer resulted in the two tanks being connected in series and the cooling increased to ensure that the milk was below 4 degrees within half an hour of milking. This has resulted in an improved Bactoscan and the latest test revealed the Bactoscan was below penalty level within a week.

FARM C

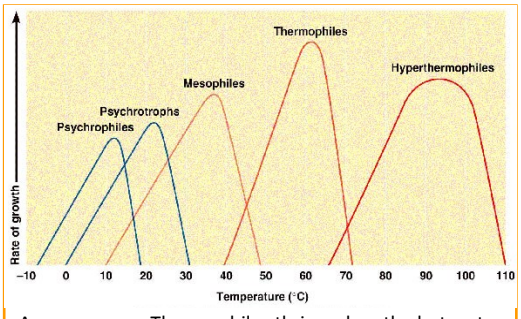
Farmer C contacted us after an increased cell count which was fast approaching severe penalties. Initial investigation suggested that the problem was a sub-clinical environmental pathogen and a farm visit highlighted several areas which would benefit improvement. The most significant finding was a high level of teat end damage with noticeable congestion of the teats as the clusters were removed. The recommendations included servicing the parlour to improve the level of vacuum reserve, short rest phase of pulsation and changing the pre-milking teat preparation to increase the amount of stimulation and time before the clusters were attached hopefully improving milk let down.

A normal teat end



Very rough hyperkeratosis

Improvements in cell counts continued and avoiding the penalty threshold was achieved after six weeks.



As you can see Thermophiles thrive when the hot water wash is inadequate.

FARM D

Farmer D initially discussed the problems he was having over the phone and a plan was put into place. Firstly we sampled the bulk tank and then arranged a farm visit resulting in additional individual samples being taken. The research suggested that heat resistant bacteria were surviving the hot wash cycle and multiplying in the milk pipeline. The temperature of the water was plenty hot enough at over 85 degrees but after cycling, was exiting at below 65 degrees with the end jar of the parlour barely becoming warm. The solution was to increase the volume of hot water available with the installation of a second cylinder. The Bactoscan and cell counts were below target levels a week later with the new system.

These case studies show that the cause of a high cell counts/Bactoscan can be one or more of a number of problems, but with a focused, scientific approach to the problem big returns can be seen. The four farms will milk 700 cows between them and average 8000 litres per cow suggesting a monthly saving of:

- 8000/12months = 667 litres per cow per month at 0.5 pence per litre penalty saved
- = **£3.34 per cow** per month or **£2,334.50 per month between the four farms**

KETOSIS PROJECT

Ketosis is one of the most common post-calving problems seen on UK dairy farms (up to 40% of cows). This is a function of a lack of energy, mainly due to intake, in the weeks following calving. Ensuring good feed intakes with a good quality diet, combined with 'fit not fat' dry cows will reduce the risk of body condition score losses from calving and associated ketosis risks.

Over the next few months we will be approaching a handful of our dairy clients to assess the risk of sub-clinical ketosis. If there is milk recording data available, then the ketosis risk can be estimated from the milk protein and butter fat produced by the cows in the first 30 days of lactation. If milk recording data is not available, then an estimation of the prevalence of sub-clinical ketosis can be made by milk sampling all cows from calving to 3 weeks in milk and multiplying the percentage going positive on a ketotest strip (1.2 to 2.9 mmol/dlitre) by 3.5. The aim of the project would be to illustrate the level of disease on our farms and anonymously rank these herds to give people an insight into the scale of the problem and where savings could be made.

There are some herds and some cows in all herds that are more prone to the problem and go on to develop disease.

Ketosis and sub-clinical ketosis costs farms in the region of £400 per cow as it reduces milk yield by 250—500 litres per year and chance of becoming pregnant by 50% in the first 100 days.

Ketosis also increases the risk of:

- Twisted stomachs (3 times more likely)
- Retained cleansings (1.75 times more likely)
- Dirty cows (1.5 times more likely)
- Lameness (2 times more likely)

Ketotic cows are twice as likely to die or be culled than cows without sub-clinical ketosis.

More recent research shows that if the individual cow is ketotic in the first week rather than first three weeks after calving then all the above risks are doubled.

If problem herds can be identified, then cows in the herd at risk of ketosis after calving can be predicted. There are a number of preventative measures and treatments that can be used on these high risk cows.

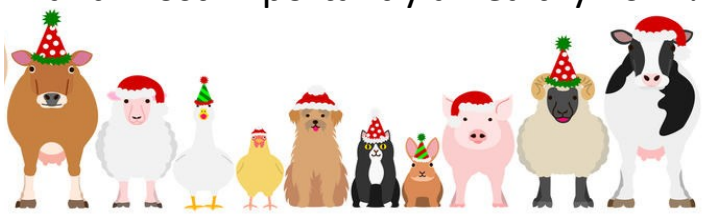
CHRISTMAS GREETINGS

As we approach the end of a memorable year made difficult by lockdowns, social distancing, furlough schemes etc we would like to thank you all for your co-operation in complying with our Coronavirus control measures.

Few would have anticipated back in March when you were first asked not to enter the lambing room and surgery that 9 months later you would still be forced to queue up outside the surgery wearing facemasks to collect prescriptions. We have certainly missed being able to hold our usual face to face meetings this year although we are all getting a little more familiar with 'Zoom' meetings.

Hopefully 2021 will see a return to some sort of normality and business as usual!

So, we would like to take this early opportunity to wish you all a very merry Christmas and most importantly a healthy 2021!



PRODUCT NEWS

MILKING COW MASTITIS TUBES

We currently have stocks of 3 milking cow mastitis tubes.

- **Ubrolexin**
- **Ubropen**
- **Orbenin LA**

With no anticipated shortages and limited supplies of **Mastiplan**. Anticipated return date for other tubes are **Combiclav LC** in January 2021, **Multiject** in February 2021 and both **Synulox LC** and **Tetra Delta** have an expected return date of the 'first quarter of 2021'.

CLOSAMECTIN INJECTION AND POUR-ON

Closamectin injection is unavailable with a likely return date of Spring 2021. ***Closamectin pour-on*** is used to treat cattle for worms, lice, mange and fluke (kills fluke down to approximately 5 week old immatures, so ideally delay treatment until at least 5 weeks after housing).

The most advantageous way of purchasing the product is in the 4 or 6 litre 'promo packs' which are in limited supply although we do currently have a quantity of 4 litre packs available. To order ***Closamectin pour-on*** or to discuss your fluke and worm control programmes for dairy cows, young stock or suckler herds this winter please contact the surgery.

Product	Administration	Active Ingredient	Kills Down To	MEAT Withdrawal Period	MILK Withdrawal Period
Combinex	Drench	Triclabendazole/Levamisole	2 weeks	56 days	X
Tribex 10%	Drench	Triclabendazole	2weeks	56 days	X
Fa**sinex 240**	Drench	Triclabendazole	2 weeks	56 days	50 days
Closamectin	Pour-on	Closantel/Ivermectin	7 weeks	28 days	X
Trodax	Injection	Nitroxynil	8 weeks	60 days	X
Tramazole	Drench	Albendazole	10 weeks	14 days	60 hours
Zanil	Drench	Oxyclosanide	10 weeks	28 days	72 hours

RESPONSIBLE USE OF MEDICINES COURSE

As part of the Red Tractor Dairy Farm Assurance it is now a requirement that a representative from the farm has been on a Medicines Course in the previous 3 years and is a strong recommendation (soon to become a requirement) for beef and sheep farms as well. We have run courses in the past, but during 2020 (for obvious reasons!) we have been unable to hold large group meetings.

To enable you to satisfy this requirement of attending a course we have adapted our Medicines Course so that the first part can now be viewed online with the second part taking place on your farm where we will go through your medicines usage, storage and recording to enable you to comply with all relevant legislation.

The cost of the course is £30 +VAT.

For more information, please contact the surgery. Clients who have registered an interest will be contacted shortly.

FOOTVAX IS BACK IN STOCK!!!!..... FOR NOW

We currently have 6 x 250ml and 10 x 50ml pack sizes back in stock with a 2022 expiry date. If you are anticipating using the product this winter we would recommend ordering the product now!!

Any questions please do not hesitate to contact Ruth or Louise at the surgery on 01729 823538.

Rispoval 4 Pneumonia Vaccine

Rispoval 4 pneumonia vaccine is currently unavailable. There are alternative intranasal and injectable vaccines which can be used.

Please contact the surgery to discuss which alternative vaccination protocols may be most appropriate for your herd.